

The TLC Story Origins

In August, 2008, one and two room school teachers from un-bridged outer-islands got together for an annual social retreat sponsored by the Seacoast Mission on its cruise boat, *The Sunbeam*. Teachers discussed the ways in which one and two-room school teaching on outer islands was challenging, isolated and isolating--compared to teaching in larger mainland schools. They acknowledged the ways in which their situations and experiences were similar to one another's, and they expressed a need and desire to extend their peer support beyond 2-3 days a year before the start of each school year.

Donna Isaacs was a new teacher on Islesford and a national facilitator for an organization called the School Reform Initiative. Donna told the island teachers about *Critical Friends Groups*, groups of educators who meet regularly for the purpose of improving student outcomes by focusing on supporting one another's professional practices (the word "critical" implies *essential* or *important*). After practicing a CFG protocol, the group decided to meet monthly during the year, and to continue to offer support to one another as a CFG, hence becoming the first cyber CFG in the country.

In the winter of 2009, the group was successfully awarded a grant from the Maine Community Foundation, which provided funding for face-to-face meeting time during the year, attendance for the entire group at a national School Reform Initiative conference and tuition for more teachers to attend a summer leadership training in CFG principles and practices. In the meantime, through a federal grant program, the Island Institute provided Tandberg video conferencing systems for all of the island schools that did not already have them. The Island Institute also frequently stepped in and supported the CFG during that first year, by providing a telephone conference call link so the CFG could continue to meet and communicate through technology failures and glitches.

The "Jessie Moment"

In late fall of 2009, Jessie Campbell, the teacher on Monhegan, presented the CFG with an alarming dilemma: Enrollment at her school for the following year was projected to go down to two siblings. Monhegan was considering closing their school due to concerns that the two brothers involved would not have sufficient social interaction with peers. This crisis was devastating to the entire group, not only because it would mean the loss of a vital CFG member, but because Monhegan's situation struck close to home for everyone. Every year-round islander knows that the closure of an island school portends the eventual end of a year-round community's sustainability. With dwindling enrollments in all of the schools, this situation could happen to any island school with the movement of just one or two families off-island.

The group embraced Monhegan's dilemma by engaging in an imaginative exercise, envisioning what it would take to keep the Monhegan school open, while meeting both the academic and social needs of its students. It became apparent that island students' isolation was not dissimilar from the teachers', and that the CFG member teachers could expand academic and social experiences significantly for students--if the students could collaborate across-islands, via technology, too.

This CFG session, later known euphemistically by the group as the "Jessie Moment", has been identified as the pivotal moment when the project was born. On the basis of the "big idea" that came out of that session, the Monhegan school board agreed to keep their school open another year, giving the group an opportunity to explore the idea of cross-island school collaboration.

A couple of months later, at the SRI annual Winter Meeting in Cambridge, MA, Donna, Jessie, Lindsay and Paula spent time between conference sessions planning their next steps for inter-island student collaboration. These "Foremothers" of the TLC agreed to focus on five important starting steps:

1. Develop leadership from within the group to sustain the work
2. Extend Monhegan's academic experience immediately through inter-island collaboration for writing lessons with students on Islesford
3. Align the islands' curricula so that beginning the following year, students on all 4 islands would be working on the same topics at the same time
4. Apply for a grant to fund a fall inter-island field trip, so students could work together face-to-face academically and get to know one another better
5. Apply for an Island Fellow from the Island Institute, who would coordinate and support the project. This application would require support from each of the school boards, as well as a financial contribution from each of the towns.

That spring, the Foremothers received a second grant from the MCF to pay for a topic-based inter-island field trip and technology support for the project. The project now had a name, coined in the MCF grant application: *The Outer Islands Teaching and Learning Collaborative (TLC)*. Shortly thereafter, the project was also granted support from each island's school board and from the Island Institute to pay for an inter-island Island Institute fellow to serve as project coordinator.

Year One: 2010-2011

The Sunbeam retreat in August 2010 was an intensive work session, as the group organized to launch Year 1 of the TLC. There were personnel changes on Matinicus, and the group was also joined by teachers from Cliff Island, bringing the total TLC enrollment to five island schools and around 30 students. Work sessions involved both curriculum and logistics planning.

Year One was launched for the students in the fall of 2010, following a highly successful "Inter-Island Event", held that year on Monhegan. IIE is an annual inter-island social event sponsored by the Sea Coast Mission and hosted by one of the islands. That year, IIE was extended a day for middle school students, who stayed another night on Monhegan to work with their teachers on fall curriculum topics. In anticipation of these students becoming the future TLC student leaders, teachers led the group in a series of ice-breaking and team building activities. They then brainstormed with their teachers on ways to collaborate using technology, and they helped plan evening social activities for their upcoming inter-island field trip.

The first TLC field trip, based on Mount Desert Island, provided students with opportunities to interact with one another while exploring that fall's science topic of "Ocean Studies." Students engaged in visits to the Bar Harbor Whale Museum, the Oceanarium, took a ranger-led walk to explore tide pools and coastal geology, a ride on a deep-sea diving boat, and visited the Abbe Museum in anticipation of their spring Native American Studies social studies unit.

The field trip was so successful, TLC teachers decided to take another inter-island field trip in the spring. Students explored Maine Native American studies topics in the Augusta area, spending a day in the woods with former Penobscot Chief Barry Dana, who taught them to build wigwams and create their own fires. They also visited the Maine State Museum and the State House, and they met their respective local legislators.

Although much of the group's initial energy was spent on aligning content area curricula (science and social studies), an unanticipated outcome of the TLC's first year was the overwhelming success of the TLC's inter-island book groups. TLC students were divided into inter-island groups according to a combination of criteria including age, grade and reading levels. Teachers began teaching one another's students across islands using skype for bi-weekly face-to-face small group meetings. Teachers designed and maintained on-line wikis for their respective groups' ongoing discussions and for posting assignments.

Over the course of Year One, students began to consider other TLC students as classmates. At the end of Year One,

teachers and students brainstormed ideas and plans to improve and expand the TLC. Teachers wanted to expedite and tighten their curriculum development process, and students wanted more social interaction with one another. Although the teachers and coordinator Anne Bardaglio had spent hundreds of hours outside of the school day working on TLC curriculum and program initiatives, the group realized that little was known in their respective TLC island communities about the work being accomplished. The group began to brainstorm ways to educate their communities about how their schools were changing through collaboration and technology.

Year Two: 2011-2012

Year Two was launched in August 2011 with a teacher retreat hosted by the Island Institute at a yoga retreat center in Island Falls. The event replaced the Sunbeam retreat that year. The group planned the fall field trip, the first trimester's curriculum and established timelines and dates for planning and meeting throughout the year. In response to the end-of-year feedback from TLC students, teachers and parents, the group identified a few new initiatives which included launching a Student Council and a Parent-Teacher-Community support group for the project.

Inter-Island Event was held on Matinicus for the first time since the beginning of that annual event (20 some odd years ago). That IIE was also historic, being the first IIE attended by Cliff Island. The concept of a Student Council was introduced to grades 3-8 students who were shown how to prepare for their first cyber election. These cyber-campaigns included inter-active graphics, video testimonials and speeches. Again, middle schoolers stayed an extra day to work on curriculum and to help teachers with planning for the upcoming year.

A few weeks later, the fall field trip took the entire TLC to the Bangor area. Students visited the Challenger Center, where they engaged in a simulated space exploration flight. At the University of Maine Orono campus, they visited the Planetarium, climbed the indoor climbing wall and engaged in team-building activities at the ropes course. At Camp Jordan, where the group bunked at night, Islesford students surprised the group at dinner with a "flash mob" on the first night, and the second night, the TLC held their first ever inter-island Halloween party and dance, complete with a costume cat walk and a haunted house.

In addition to formalizing science and social studies collaborative units and continuing to develop inter-island book groups, the TLC added weekly theme-based kinder-younger meetings for the youngest students via video-conferencing units and a group kinder-younger "read aloud" time during book group meetings. The student council organized inter-island Christmas "Secret Santa" gift and valentine exchanges across islands, as well as cyber-games meetings and an inter-island "Read-a-Thon" to raise money for Cystic Fibrosis. In the spring, they presented a fat check to their friend Zeke, from Matinicus, who had suffered all year from CF complications and hospitalizations. They also organized the design and sale of a TLC T-shirt to raise money for their spring field trip to Boston. At the same time, teachers, parents and community members formed an inter-island Parent Teacher Community Group (PTC) to raise funds for and awareness about the TLC.

The spring field trip was aligned with the "Colonial America" social studies unit. Students visited the Freedom Trail, Plimouth Plantation, Faneuil Hall, the Salem Witch Museum as well as the Boston Museum of Science and the Boston Aquarium. Evenings, the students had pool parties at the hotel, a chance to see a performance of The Blue Man Group, and they visited a video arcade where they played laser tag.

By the end of Year 2, students were communicating and collaborating with one another across islands on a daily basis. Visitors were continually surprised to walk into TLC schools and find students talking with one another on their laptops or video-conferencing screens. In the spring, the Islesford School was re-named in honor of long-time Islesford resident and internationally known children's book author/illustrator Ashley Bryan. When Ashley Bryan visited the school to read poems and present his latest work, his sessions were attended by other TLC schools via their video-conferencing units. Also that spring, Monhegan and the Ashley Bryan School students surprised their communities and the rest of the TLC with a joint virtual poetry slam performance.

The Evolution of a Mission and a Vision

Year 2 also marked some difficult challenges for the TLC. Two teachers planned to leave at the end of the year, including Foremother Jessie Campbell, and the two-year Island Institute fellowship tenure was due to end. In March, the TLC teachers convened at the Island Institute for an all-day session dedicated to visioning and future planning. During a day of tough conversations about the future of the project, its mission, goals and objectives, TLC teachers began sorting out short and long term priorities and plans for the upcoming transitions. They outlined goals and began defining roles within the TLC in anticipation of incorporating new members. Their mission statement:

The community of The Outer Islands TLC creates a lifeline of support for students and teachers in order to sustain our one and two room island schools.

Goals included:

- *Student empowerment and collaboration*
- *Technology*
- *Community*
- *Relational trust*
- *New teacher orientation*
- *Teacher support & creating a culture of collaboration*
- *Leadership training*
- *Standards-based curriculum development that leads to student academic achievement*
- *Communication*

Later in the spring, as part of an ongoing dialog with the Island Institute about how to define the relationship between the institute and the TLC, the TLC Foremothers met and drafted the following four points:

1) At this time we want to continue to be considered an island-initiated project that is supported by the Island Institute. We look forward to continuing to have a close, collaborative relationship with the Island Institute where we can continue to develop the TLC for our islands and our students, and the Island Institute can continue to meet its mission goals by supporting our initiative.

2) We feel that the TLC coordinator is an integral part of the TLC therefore we would like to work with the Institute to define the new position at the Island Institute, how [the coordinator] can best support the TLC, and how the TLC can best support [the coordinator]

3) We would like to work with the Institute to define other support needs for the TLC outside of the [coordinator] position (e.g., curriculum support, new teacher support) and how those can best be met [through a new grant opportunity].

4) At this time, we think we can advise the Island Institute on how to support the development of inter-island collaborative initiatives on other islands. We feel that these initiatives will need to develop organically out of specific groups' needs. We also believe that the first step in determining those needs is to support the development of the kinds of collaborative practices that allowed us to develop the TLC, specifically our Critical Friends Group (CFG) practice (a type of PLC--Professional Learning Community).

In August 2012, coordinator Anne Bardaglio left the Island Institute to take a teaching position with the Coastal Studies for Girls program. Anne realized that working with the students was her favorite part of working with the TLC, and she was inspired by the project to want to become a teacher herself. Through support from the Island Institute,

Jessie Campbell agreed to continue working with the project through the fall as a consultant, assisting with orientation and support for the new coordinator and for new teachers on Matinicus, Monhegan and new TLC member school, Frenchboro.

Year Three: 2012 - 2013

Year three began with the challenge of initiating and absorbing 3 new teachers, a new coordinator and a new school into the group. Elise Pelletier was hired by the island institute to coordinate the project along with responsibility for managing other Island Institute sponsored projects.

At the annual Sunbeam retreat, teachers agreed to slow down collaboration efforts during the first trimester, so that new teachers could get their feet on the ground, get to know their schools, the technology, their communities and their students. Three strong, influential TLC student leaders had graduated the previous spring (student council President, treasurer and P.R. person), and the next tier of leadership was significantly younger--all but one student still not yet middle-school aged. With the intention of accelerating their evolution into leadership roles, the group decided to send all 4th-7th grade students to a leadership training program two weeks prior to inter-island event.

Another far-reaching decision was made: To share leadership roles through a new "domain" system. Over the summer, three TLC founders and the coordinator had worked to identify and categorize the various roles and responsibilities necessary to make TLC operations run smoothly. The result was the identification of roughly a dozen "domains" of leadership. At the retreat, teachers were asked to volunteer for liaison positions related to the Domains, making them point people for the new coordinator, so that she would not have to check in with the entire group for every decision.

Cliff Island enthusiastically offered to host inter-island event, and because of the distance involved in everyone getting to Casco Bay, the event was planned for two nights. The newly trained student leadership was evident from the start; students stepped up to help facilitate games and events, and there was significantly more cross-island tent sharing and general cross-island social-pollination than ever before seen at inter-island event. The TLC was thrilled to be on Cliff Island, and the islanders outdid themselves as hosts of the event. With Frenchboro joining the TLC, for the first time, all IIE attendees were now also members of the TLC.

The fall field trip at Camp Jordan in 2011 had been so successful that the group decided to return to Camp Jordan as a "base" for the 2012 fall field trip, and the group took advantage of the beautiful facilities and the opportunity to spend time together "doing school." Representatives from "Maine Energy for Education Program (MEEP)" came to the camp to teach science lessons about wind and solar power, and the Trimester One book groups got a live, face-to-face kickoff, as did the newly elected student council. Students also visited local sites that pertained to their "energy, machines and industry" unit: the Cole Transportation Museum and the Bangor Discovery Museum. Older students had the opportunity to conduct interviews with veterans at the War Memorial. One evening, the students enjoyed their second annual inter-island Halloween Party at Camp Jordan, and the other evening, the group took a "ghostly Bangor tour", which was chock full of local history, including paranormal phenomena. The group also hosted its first ever inter-island baby shower for Islesford teacher Lindsay Eysnogle, complete with all sorts of gifts and a video offering advice to as-yet-unborn baby Luciana on "How to be a great island kid."

The book group initiative continued to evolve, as teachers began working on structures for inter-island accountability--sharing standards, rubrics and documenting student progress for one another's reporting needs. A highly successful unit of collaboration occurred over the winter and spring around an ingenious inter-island "Westward Expansion" pen pal project. Students took on roles of pioneer settlers or Native Americans and wrote anonymous pen pal letters to one another across islands. Each pioneer/native pair wrote from the perspective of a character their own age, using historical research to inform the details in their letters. At the spring field trip, students brought all the letters they had received, and they enjoyed a "reveal" moment when the pony express came to deliver

their final letters from their pen pals--whom they then "met" face to face.

This culminating curriculum activity took place in Portland, where students enjoyed visits to the Children's Museum (youngsters), a local radio station (olders), and an exhibit about electricity in Maine at the Maine Historical Society. Students also had an opportunity to choose some activities from a "choice" menu, such as visiting a college campus (olders), visiting a train museum, the Portland Museum of Art, or to walk the underground railroad "freedom trail". The group enjoyed yet another great theater experience, "Stomp", with tickets purchased by the Island Institute.

The TLC student council ran yet another highly successful fundraiser in year 3, this time to benefit the National Humane Society. Each island held fundraising events to add to the collective total of nearly \$2,000. These kids really care about animals!

At the end of Year 3, the TLC saw two more of its Founding Foremothers leave classroom teaching--but not the TLC. Discussions continued between the Foremothers about forming a 501c3. Donna Isaacs began talking with people about the feasibility and reasons for taking this step, and she received the endorsement of all TLC teachers to pursue the formation of the 501c3. At that time, it was not clear whether the TLC would continue to work with the Island Institute or pursue its own board, funders, etc.

In August, 2013, Elise Pelletier announced that she would be leaving the TLC to take a position teaching art at Scarborough High School.

Year Four: 2013-2014

The fall of 2013 marked the fourth and final year for the rotating curriculum for the TLC. Three new teachers were welcomed to the TLC: Audrey Noether and Lauren Simmons were the two new teachers at the Ashley Bryan School on Islesford, and Christie Jernigan accepted the teaching position on Frenchboro. Jessie Campbell couldn't stay away from the TLC and was hired in September by the Island Institute as the new TLC coordinator.

Teachers met in mid-September for a day and a half retreat at the Island Institute to welcome the new teachers, set some project goals for the year and plan curriculum for trimester one. At the retreat, teachers decided to break each of the trimesters into 4-5 week blocks, either focusing on social studies or science, instead of trying to teach both topics at the same time.

Trimester 1 began with students studying Rocks and Minerals, which was enhanced with some geology-themed workshops during Inter-Island Event, hosted that year on Isle au Haut. The science unit wrapped up with a two-day, face-to-face field trip to Bethel, Maine where students went on a geological dig and participated in a collaborative science fair.

Students kicked off their world studies social studies unit by focusing first on the continent of Asia. Then, during the winter months, they studied aspects of the continent of Africa, which was supported with some virtual field trips and presentations, such as a virtual African drumming performance and a lesson about some well known African folktales by author and artist, Ashley Bryan. Students also studied the human body in science during the winter months, and teachers used the book group format of breaking students into age leveled groups to do more age-appropriate lessons and learning activities for science.

During the month of January, TLC teachers met in Portland for another face-to-face opportunity to plan curriculum for trimester two, and to make planning decisions for the planned spring field trip to Quebec. They also discussed some funding questions regarding future sustainability of the TLC. At that meeting, teachers rated the most important aspects of the TLC in terms of what needed to be sustained and funded in order for the TLC to continue. The top three areas teachers highlighted were: 1. Project Coordinator Position 2. Travel Time for Project Coordinator 3.

Student and Teacher Events/Face-to-Face Time.

In February, Ruth Kermish-Allen and Jessie Campbell (at the Island Institute) drafted a proposal to participating TLC schools, that included an outline of how previous grant funding for the TLC was to end that year. The resulting decrease in the TLC budget for the 2014-2015 school year meant bringing costs down from a \$150,000 budget to one closer to \$100,000 at most. Donna and Henry Isaacs had very graciously provided \$12,000 from the sale of Henry's artwork (the money in the TLC bank account) for the use of student events for the TLC. The Island Institute would be able to provide \$60,000 to support the activities of the TLC for the next school year, and it remained fully committed to keeping the full-time staff person in place to support the TLC. The proposal asked schools to contribute up to \$4,000 a piece to help fill the funding gap in the budget. Ruth and Jessie met with individual school boards, principals, and teachers throughout the rest of the winter and spring to talk about the proposal, and all six of the schools committed to contributing some kind of monetary amount to help fund the TLC for the 2014-15 school year. The amount that TLC schools were able to contribute collectively totaled close to \$16,000.

Spring brought the historical and epic trip to Quebec that tied into the European studies social studies unit. Fifty students, teachers, and parents took a CYR bus across the border for a four night, five day trip to Quebec. The group visited historical sites like The Plains of Abraham in Battlefields Park and Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, saw beautiful landmarks such as the Canyon Ste. Anne and the Montmorency Falls, toured museums, walked the old city, and dined at a variety of different restaurants. \$12,000 of the trip was funded by the money in the TLC account, \$6,000 was donated by the Island Institute, and the rest was paid for by individual schools.

Spring marked the end of third year of the TLC student council. There were fewer "older" members of the Student Council than in previous years, but students were still able to meet with some frequency. The major accomplishments of the year were planning a spring spirit week, hosting annual Christmas and Valentine's virtual celebrations and an end-of-year TLC graduation.

The end of trimester three brought a close to another successful year of book groups. This was the first year that teachers worked with the same group of students throughout the entire year. Each trimester, the topics/genres were tied to either the social studies or science unit that students were studying during that time period.

At the end of Year 4 the TLC said goodbye to Mary Weber on Monhegan, Pam Stock on Matinicus, and Christie Jernigan on Frenchboro, all of whom resigned from their island teaching positions. Donna Isaacs, Lindsay Eysnogle and Paula Greatorex, 3 of the 4 original Foremothers, closed the TLC bank account and contributed the remaining funds (around \$12,000 remaining from Henry Isaacs' art sale fundraiser) to the Island Institute, specifically earmarking the money for TLC student events.

The Foremothers also wrote a statement, giving full responsibility for the TLC and its sustainability to the Island Institute, in partnership with the participating island schools of the Cranberry Isles, Cliff Island, Frenchboro, Isle au Haut, Matinicus, and Monhegan. They specified that they hoped to see the Island Institute create a TLC Advisory Group, consisting of former TLC teachers, parents, school board members and community members, that would assist the Island Institute and the TLC coordinator in promoting the TLC's interests and initiatives both on the islands and within the Island Institute. Although it would not be a policy-making body, the group could help the coordinator by acting as a sounding board, helping formulate proposals, seek grants, weather transitions and provide other kinds of advocacy.

Year Five: 2014 - 2015

As always, the start of a new year brought some changes to the TLC. Two new teachers joined the TLC community: Jan Kieper was hired as the new teacher on Frenchboro and Emily Britelli became the new teacher on Monhegan.

Increased enrollments on the Cranberries, Isle au Haut and Monhegan brought the total number of students in the TLC up to almost 40. Since no students were enrolled at the Matinicus island school, their school board did not hire a teacher for the 2014-15 school year. However, it was notable that even with no teacher or students, the Matinicus School Board voted to continue to give a financial contribution to the TLC through the Island Institute, in the hope and anticipation of having a viable school that would continue to participate in the project in the future. The rest of the five TLC schools also made financial contributions to the TLC. Each school signed a Memo of Understanding (MOU) with the Island Institute to confirm their participation and support of the project.

Teachers met in early September for their annual TLC Teacher Retreat. Most of the group stayed aboard the Seacoast Mission's Sunbeam--which was docked in Rockland Harbor--and then spent a day at the Island Institute planning curriculum, finding common collaboration times, and working on team-building activities to get to know their new team. The following week, teachers were reunited again, this time along with their students, for an epic Inter-Island Event hosted on Great Cranberry Island. The Cranberry Isles welcomed the TLC with open arms, and students, teachers, and families enjoyed special time together. They took part in workshops taught by island community members, participated in a TLC talent show, and attended an amazing performance by the Frogtown Puppeteers, who were barged out to the island specially to perform for the TLC.

Beginning our fifth year of the project meant going back to year-one of our curriculum rotation. Olde In early September, students from the Cranberries, Isle au Haut, and Monhegan jumped head first into their unit on Island Ecology and Biology, by attending a three day, two night excursion to the Schoodic Institute at Acadia National Park--known as SEA Camp. Students learned about forestry, marine biology and scientific reporting in a hands-on environment. Then, all students enjoyed a science-focused field trip to mid-coast Maine, where they worked with author Mary Cerullo, who wrote *Country Fish, City Fish*. They visited the Herring Gut Learning Center in Port Clyde, to learn about aquaculture, and through the Puffin Center in Rockland, they participated in a program where they learned about local birds they can find on their islands. Lauren Jacobs from Maine Winter Sports joined both the Inter-Island Event and fall field trip to lead the group in games and exercises. She continued to lead virtual morning exercises for interested TLC schools on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the rest of the year. Her sessions included special monthly challenges to help inspire students to get outdoors, eat healthy snacks, and lead more active lives.

Students studied Island history in Social Studies during their first trimester. They wrote "mystery" postcards to one another listing three clues that would help the recipient know what island the writer lived on. The clues focused on their islands' geography, economics and/or history. Student then had the opportunity to share and guess who their postcard was from during a virtual Halloween party in the fall. Students also created island "board games" that focused on their islands' histories, both past and present. Each school created one or more games that everyone had an opportunity to play during our fall field trip. Fall book group themes were also tied to a local history focus. Each of the six book groups read books written by Maine authors and/or read stories that were set in Maine. Wikis, google docs, and zoom accounts were still the technologies of choice for book group weekly collaborations, and for the first time, a Pre-K book group was created.

We successfully launched the fourth year of our inter-island student council. Students ran for positions virtually, creating videos and slideshows. Two enthusiastic eighth graders were elected as the new joint leaders of the group. Student Council met regularly and created many new initiatives: A "Makers Club" had students meeting after school to make different items for people or animals in need, such as blankets for children in hospitals and biscuits for dogs in shelters. The student council also hosted a "Virtual Swap Day" where students were paired up with peers from another school and got to interview them about what life was like at their school. They then received a virtual tour of their school, classroom, and even a sneak-peek of what was in their desk! Along with these new initiatives, the student council hosted traditional holiday parties, spirit weeks, and even helped to create a new TLC logo to be printed on t-shirts.

Teachers launched their sixth year of meeting as a Critical Friends Group (CFG). Teachers continued to meet

monthly using protocols to examine student work, read and analyze common text, and work through dilemmas and challenges. New teachers on Monhegan and Frenchboro responded positively to the group and found the continuous support beneficial to their first year of island teaching.

In mid- fall, Ruth Kermish-Allen moved on from her role as Education Director after ten years at the Island Institute. It took several months before filling her position, but in January 2015, Yvonne Thomas was hired as the new Education Director. Yvonne had been the guidance counselor at the Vinalhaven school for 13 years, and she had also served as the guidance counselor for Matinicus for several years. So, she was familiar with the TLC project and with the positive impact it has made on outer island schools, teachers, and students.

Over the winter, another island postcard collaboration project wrapped-up students' science studies of Island Ecology and Biology. Each TLC student either photographed or drew a picture of a creature that is found on or in the waters that surround his or her island. The student sealed the drawing or photo up in an envelope and wrote a short riddle describing the creature on the exterior of the envelope. When students received their postcards they worked to try and solve the riddle on their own and used help from their peers and other means of research to try and identify the mystery island creature inside the envelope.

In trimester two, students moved on to a unit on marine biology. They collaborated by participating in a common creative writing assignment: Students were asked to write a short narrative from the perspective of a marine animal that interested them. Their pieces had to include factual information about their creature's diet, habitat, mating and production processes, along with physical traits of the creature and how their traits could be influenced by their environment. Students met virtually in grade-level groups to share-out their final writing pieces and to compare and contrast the different animals they had researched.

Native American Studies was the focus of trimester two's social studies unit. Each of the TLC schools took on the job of becoming an expert on one of the four Wabanaki tribes and then created a video to teach their TLC classmates what they had learned about their tribe. Students focused on presenting information about their tribe's geography in the state, as well as information about food, clothing and shelter. Schools also participated in a virtual field trip to the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington D.C. A volunteer docent met virtually to offer a tour of the Native American Art held in the collection of the museum. Students also read books in their book second trimester book groups, focusing on Native American life.

Our TLC Parent-Teacher Group got off to a late start; it didn't have its first meeting until January. The focus of the group for the year was to develop new ways and opportunities for the TLC to raise funds and awareness. The Island Institute had planned on asking schools for continued financial contributions for the 2015-16 school year, but finding additional funding for aspects of the project, such as field trips, was still challenging. The PTG came up with the idea of hosting a "TLC Road Show" where Jessie would travel to each of the TLC islands during the summer to host a small fundraising event that would be determined by each island community.

In the spring, schools participated in their final science collaboration which was tied to students' studies of ecology from the previous trimester. Students participated in a "Race to Grow" competition where they planted "mystery" seeds sent to them with the challenge being to grow the tallest plant by choosing different variables that might affect their plants growth. Students logged the growth of their plants virtually, and results of the competition was announced during our Spring field trip to Augusta.

During the field trip, students, teachers and parents stayed at Camp Mechuwana in Winthrop for three days and nights, sharing lodging, meals, and lots of time to play and explore. For two of the days, programs mostly came to the camp, including the Maine Historical Society, Lauren Jacobs, and Project Learning Tree. The group spent an entire day visiting the Capitol building in Augusta, which was the culminating event in their Maine Studies unit for the third trimester. Older students had an opportunity to page in the senate, and students in 3rd-8th grade gave a fantastic

presentation about the TLC to the Maine Education and Cultural Committee during one of their official meetings.

As the school year wrapped up, Jessie's "TLC Road Show" was just taking off. Between late June and early August she traveled to seven islands to host bake sales, craft making workshops, pie auctions and talent shows--all to benefit the TLC. At each event, Jessie sold TLC t-shirts and bumper stickers, gave presentations, and screened a short video about the TLC created by the Island Institute. Some events were better attended than others. With some events raising only \$200 and other events raising over \$2,000, the total earnings of the road show was a little over \$6,000. It was challenging to organize and promote the TLC events in the summer, on islands when most year-round community members are extremely busy working, but Jessie found some success in pairing the TLC event with an already successful island events, such as the annual pie auction on Isle au Haut.

Year Six: 2015-2016

The beginning of the fall brought great news for the TLC, three students were enrolling in the Matinicus School and their new teacher, Mara Linaberger, was excited to participate in the project. Veteran teachers welcomed her and Mandy Sabine, the new teacher on Monhegan, during the annual teacher retreat in early September. As usual, the teachers and coordinator used this time to connect, build, relationships, and develop curriculum and collaborations for the year. The group also spent time defining the project structure and goals for the year. The group defined the following goals for the 2015-16 school year:

- Give students as many purposeful social and academic opportunities as possible, to interact with their TLC peers and other TLC teachers.
- Expand on elements of the TLC we do well (i.e. book groups) and ease up on collaborations that are challenging.
- Focus on professional development and resource sharing for teachers.

Inter-Island Event (IIE) was hosted on Monhegan Island in late September. The event was packed with workshops facilitated by island locals, epic games of capture the flag and kickball, and a class-act TLC talent show. IIE was followed by another trip to SEA Camp for the TLC olders. Although biology and ecology was not in the science rotation for year six, teachers felt that the SEA Camp field trip had been such a positive experience for middle school students the previous year, they wanted them to experience it again.

The fall field trip brought the TLC to Bangor to focus on our space exploration science unit. The two night trip included a simulated mission at the Bangor Challenger Center, a group program at the University of Maine's Astronomy and Planetarium Center, and an excursion to the University's high and low ropes course.

Back in the classroom, students collaborated on a social studies project that focused on the concept of exploration. K-2 students participated in individual research on their own ideas about exploration, and grades 3-8 students researched the lives of a specific explorers. Students came together at the end of the trimester to participate in "interviews," to find out what students had learned about exploration and explorers. Many students had the opportunity to role play; They virtually acted the parts of the explorers they had researched, attending the final interview in full costume.

Six book groups began collaborating during our first trimester. Books were not linked to any specific curriculum topic, rather teachers focused more on using grade level Common Core reading standards to guide their work with their book groups. Teachers used rubrics and standards-based 1-4 grading system to give both students and fellow teachers more concrete feedback on student work. For the first time, Jessie used "Google Classroom" in her book group as a platform to give and collect assignments virtually, instead of using wikis. The platform was a hit with students and easy to navigate as a book group teacher.

The TLC Student Council met as a group during Inter-Island Event and voted on new officers for the year. It was the easiest and most civil election in the history of the TLC! The group met throughout the year and made plans for a

virtual Halloween party and a “Winter Luau” celebration, where schools planned to share their “Secret Santa gifts” and virtually act out “warm and cold weather themed” charades. They went on to plan the annual TLC spirit week (which included the first ever “Star Wars” day!) in March, and end of year activities to be held both virtually and during the spring field trip.

Teachers continued to meet virtually every-other week, to collaborate and plan curriculum. The Critical Friends Group continued to meet monthly and helped support new and veteran teachers. In early winter, the new Matinicus teacher, Mara, resigned from her teaching position and a new teacher, Dawn Bedenik, was hired to fill the position after the holiday break. The CFG was instrumental--both in supporting Mara through the struggles she was experiencing in the fall leading up to her departure, and in helping transition Dawn into the position mid-year.

Remaining teachers in the CFG were given an amazing opportunity, through a private donor, to attend the School Reform Initiative Winter Meeting being held in Miami, Florida in January. Lauren from Islesford, Jan from Frenchboro, and Mandy from Monhegan were sent for three days and nights to Miami. They were accompanied by Jessie and Yvonne, who were sponsored by the Island Institute. The group received training in SRI protocols, practices, and principles. They collaborated with colleagues from around the nation, and swam in the (warm to them) ocean. The group came back revitalized and inspired to make sure that their commitment to continue to learn about and use SRI protocols and CFG practices--the work that created and has sustained the TLC to date-- remains a priority within our work as a TLC.

Winter brought another new opportunity for the TLC. February marked the first meeting of the newly formed TLC Advisory Group. The purpose of the group was to support clear and effective communication between the Island Institute and Outer Islands TLC schools and communities; to ensure that there continues to be a strong islander voice in TLC programming development. The group would also help brainstorm with II Education staff on how to best refine, develop, implement, and share existing and emerging TLC programming possibilities and promote the sustainability of the program. The creation of this group was the fulfillment of the Island Institute’s commitment to the TLC Foremothers when it took over ownership and control of the TLC in 2013.

Members of the group included:

- Natalie Ames - representing Matinicus - former TLC parent & school board chair
- Cheryl Crowley - representing Cliff Island - former TLC parent & PTC chair
- Paula Greatorex - representing Isle au Haut - founding member & current Isle au Haut teacher
- Lindsay Eysnogle - representing Frenchboro- current Frenchboro principal - former Cranberry Isles teacher & founding member
- Donna Isaacs - representing Cranberry Isles - former Cranberry Isles teacher & founding member
- Eva Murray - representing Matinicus - former school board member
- Jes Stevens - representing Monhegan - current TLC parent & school board chair
- Heather Webster - representing Cranberry Isles - current principal

Objectives of the first meeting included building group morale and working agreements as well as reflecting on the progression of the TLC project over the last six years. The group also gave critical feedback to Yvonne and Jessie regarding a new funding strategy that the Island Institute was interested in presenting to TLC school boards during late winter/early spring. Lastly, the group decided to go forward with helping create a procedure packet for TLC field trips, based on parent and teacher feedback from survey results. A small committee was formed to help Jessie draft the procedures that would be presented for feedback to teachers and at the spring meeting of the Advisory Group.

Winter curriculum for students included a science collaboration that focused on earth processes and natural disasters. Students became experts on grade level topics and participated in virtual “Scientific Summits” to discuss with their peers, the processes, systems and events they researched, and the impact they have had on the world. Younger students took on characteristics of their earth processes and disasters during virtual “summits,” in which

they introduced themselves as Ernie the Earthquake or Veronica the Volcano, and tried to decide which one had the worst impact on the planet. Middle and older students role-played either real or fictitious experts in their fields (oceanographers, meteorologists, and so on). During their virtual “summits” they made persuasive arguments about the impact their topic had on the planet. A panel of teachers, acting as lead scientists, judged their presentations and gave feedback through structured rubrics. The collaboration format was a great success.

Warmer weather brought a final collaboration in social studies that was also tied with book choices for Trimester 3 book groups--focusing on Colonial America and the Revolutionary War. Younger students read common texts in book group, and then individual schools became experts in specific aspects of colonial living, such as clothing, punishment, and food. Students came up with presentations and activities to share what they learned with their TLC peers during the spring field trip. Older students picked a figure from American history (starting in colonial times up until the present) to research and run as a candidate for the current presidential election. Students were given a list of guiding questions to help them with their research, and then they each gave a final, live presentation, during the spring field trip in front of their teachers, parents, and peers. Students dressed up as their candidates and gave persuasive speeches on why they would make the best leader for this country. A panel of teachers moderated the discussion and the entire TLC participated in a mock election to vote for the next president of the United States.

The spring field trip brought 50 students, teachers, and parents to New Gloucester for three nights, staying at the Wayfinder School. Everyone worked collaboratively to prepare, serve, and clean-up meals. The group participated in a service project at the school and stayed in residential buildings together. Island Readers and Writers brought author, Mary Cerullo back to work with the students to focus on weather and natural disasters. The group took a bus to Portland for a day to attend a writing program at The Telling Room, explore the Maine State Art Museum, and have a tour of the Longfellow House to tie into their social studies unit. The student council helped throw a secret retirement party for long time Isle au Haut teacher and founding TLC member, Paula Greatorex. The group also surprised Jessie with a pie party and a TLC scrapbook, as she would be stepping down from her position as TLC coordinator at the end of the year.

The TLC Advisory Group met one more time in the spring to receive updates regarding TLC funding and to review the TLC Field Trip Procedures that the small committee had drafted and presented to teachers for their review and approval. The Island Institute administrators present expressed that they planned to continue to support the TLC at the same level they have for the coming 2016-17 school year and to ask schools for the same financial contributions they have made in the past. The Institute planned to put in place a three-year strategic plan for funding the project that should be defined by early next school year. The Advisory group gave final feedback for the TLC field trip procedures and recommended implementing them in the fall of the following school year.

The group was also informed of the TLC teachers' and coordinator's decision to change their four-year rotating curriculum for social studies and science to a three-year rotating curriculum. The rotation is broken into subjects and standards for the three traditional groups in the TLC: youngers (K-2), middles (3-5), and older (6-8). The science rotation is tied to Next Generation Standards for Science and the social studies rotation remains linked to Maine State Learning Results.

Students and teachers said farewell and thank you in late spring to long time collaborator, Lauren Jacobs from Maine Winter Sports who was returning to graduate school. Lauren had continued throughout the year, leading virtual morning exercises and inspiring students to be active and healthy. Maine Winter Sports (who has recently changed their name to Outdoor Sport Institute) hired Erin Fray who still hopes to work with the TLC during field trips and inter-island events.

Dawn Bedenik, resigned from her teaching position on Matinicus in late May and a long-term sub was hired to fill the position for the rest of the year. Matinicus' participation in the TLC had diminished throughout the spring and they were not able to attend the spring field trip. A new school board was voted in, the members of which are not as

familiar with the project. Prior to her departure, little communication occurred between the Matinicus school community and the TLC coordinator about future participation with the project. Superintendent Bob Webster is a big supporter of the TLC project, and it is hoped that he will be a strong ally moving forward.

The year ended with the TLC saying farewell not only to Isle au Haut teacher, Paula Greatorex, but also to long-time Cliff Island teachers, Josh and Heidi Holloway and TLC Coordinator Jessie Odgren. Josh, Heidi and Jessie participated in the TLC since the very beginning of the project. With Paula, Josh, Heidi, and Jessie all moving on from the project, the TLC was about to enter a new era--one with no founding teachers still participating in the project as classroom teachers. Jessie and Paula would remain in the Advisory Group with the other two founding teachers, Lindsay Eynogle and Donna Isaacs, in the coming year--Year Seven.

Year Seven: 2016-2017

The year began with many new faces during a time of transition for the TLC. Tess Beem joined the TLC as Program Coordinator in mid-July. Three new teachers joined the TLC on Isle au Haut, Cliff, and Matinicus. Rita MacWilliam was hired on Isle au Haut, Michele Turner on Cliff, and Linda Murray on Matinicus. Lindsay Eynogle accepted the position of principal for the Cranberry Isles, while maintaining that position on Frenchboro, as well. William Shuttleworth took over as Superintendent for Matinicus school, as well as Monhegan. Early on in the fall Jessie Odgren left her role as member of the TLC Advisory Board.

This was to be a milestone year for the TLC, as it was the first that there would not be any founding members participating in the day-to-day functioning of the TLC. (Though several founding teachers remained active on the TLC Advisory Board).

FALL

In mid-Sept all the teachers gathered at the Island Institute offices for the annual Teacher Retreat. Much work was done in building trust and group dynamics, as well as establishing a curriculum path for science and social studies. With three new teachers (of seven total) and a new program coordinator - a large portion of the face-to-face time was spent ensuring all members were up to speed and on the same page about the functioning and purpose of the TLC. Like with many Teacher Retreats, but especially with such a high proportion of new faces, everyone involved went away having given and received a wealth of knowledge and work.

Later on in September, the schools met for their first in-person event, Inter-Island Event on Frenchboro. All schools except Matinicus were present. This was the first time Tess' and the TLC students met! Weather was balmy and sunny, making for a pleasant three days. Programming was provided with help from Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT), Douglas Cornman of Maine Seacoast Mission, Beau Lissy of the MDI School District music program, and Island Readers and Writers author Karen Talbot. MCHT staff lead hikes with many nature inspired games and activities, as well as a night hike to Pebble Beach to view the stars and observe Saturn through a telescope! Douglas lead entertaining and engaging sessions around improv and theater (such a hit!). Beau lead drumming sessions, which a culminating drum circle including all the students. Karen lead a nature art session focused on observation and close drawing of artifacts from the natural world. There was a talent show in the church one evening, which included country music karaoke, an original skit by Monhegan, acoustic guitar by teacher Audrey Noether, stilt walking, Batman and Godzilla impressions by Cliff's kindergartener (!), comedy sketches, lullabies, portrait drawing, and more! The Frenchboro community were wonderful, generous hosts. The evening potlucks were epic and awe-inspiring. Everyone departed on day three, happy, tired and excited for the year to come!

October marked the first Advisory Group meeting. It was hosted in-person at the Island Institute. It included TLC advisors Cheryl Crowley (Cliff), Jes Stevens (Monhegan), Eva Murray (Matinicus), Natalie Ames (Matinicus), Paula Greatorex (Isle au Haut), Lindsay Eynogle (Cranberries and Frenchboro), Donna Isaacs (Cranberries), as well as Island Institute staff Tess Beem (Education Associate and TLC Coordinator) and Yvonne Thomas (Education

Director). The first portion of the meeting was spent introducing Tess to the advisors, updating the group on new teacher hirings and fall happening like the Teacher Retreat, Inter-Island Event and upcoming Fall Field Trip. The second half of the meeting provided updates to the group about recent changes to the Institute's funding model and spurred discussion on how to sustainably fund the program in the future. Institute staff members Karen Burns and Michelle Tussing were also present during the meeting to answer big picture questions about organizational direction and funding. The group departed the meeting having decided to increase their meeting frequency from quarterly to monthly in order to dive more deeply into topics concerning future programming and funding.

Late October brought all the schools together again for the annual Fall Field Trip, which took place at the Hurricane Island Outward Bound (OB) campus in Newry, Maine, in the foothills of the White Mountains. College students participating in an outdoor education course with OB provided the bulk of the programming for the trip. The instructors created custom lessons on map and compass navigation and Leave No Trace principles. Island Readers and Writers author Kim Ridley lead a session on nature writing. Of course an afternoon was well spent playing capture the flag, a TLC tradition! Evening lessons included a night hike to learn about crepuscular and nocturnal animal adaptations and a campfire complete with songs, stories and marshmallows. Poor weather on the second day cut some schools time short as they decided to head for home, with the threat of canceled ferry boats. Though the weather was not favorable at the end of the trip, students, parents and teachers pushed themselves outside of their comfort zones and committed to enjoying their time together.

This trip was noteworthy, as it was the first trip for which the newly developed "Field Trip Procedures" document was implemented. This guide outlined expectations for participating students and chaperones and codified an emergency response policy.

In January, over the Martin Luther King long weekend, TLC middle schoolers from Cliff, Isle au Haut, and the Cranberry Isles convened in Belfast, along with students from Swans Island, for the annual Middle School Retreat. The event was coordinated by Douglas Cornman of the Maine Seacoast Missions, with support from Island Institute staff members Tess Beem and Caroline Moore. Middle schoolers spent the weekend discussing their impending transition from their small, island schools to high schools on the mainland. Programming included brainstorming sessions on questions and myths about high school, and a Q&A panel with MDI High School guidance counselors and students who had formerly been in outer island schools. Social time was spent on games and in the swimming pool.

SPRING

In January the Advisory Group began implementing a program review of the TLC, which hadn't been done since the program began 7 years earlier. The goal of the review was to better inform decisions to be made about future funding models. This work included formulating and disseminating a survey to the broad TLC community, including past and present teachers, students, parents, school administrators and other collaborators. Starting in January, Advisors worked to compile a contact list with Tess created and revised survey questions. A finalized survey was sent out using SurveyMonkey in February. The survey was closed in March, then responses were collected. April and May were spent analyzing and summarizing responses in order to generate a report. In June a report of the survey findings was shared with communities. A major finding was the continued need to increase public awareness of the TLC to year-round and seasonal community members not directly involved with the island schools. This began a summer PR campaign including a Working Waterfront article; What Works Solutions Library postings on the Institute's website; social media exposure through Facebook, Instagram, and blog posts; and posters made to put up at public venues on island to spur awareness and inquiry.

In February, Matinicus altered their school calendar to take an extended spring break for most of the month. This was done in part to accommodate the school's one family, who had to leave island during that time. The school session resumed at the end of February. The last day of school was extended to late June in order to make this change possible.

April was marked with the occurrence of Spirit Week, which happened right before April Vacation.

Mid-May the TLC gather for four days on MDI for their Spring Field Trip. The trip began with team building and challenge activities at Camp Beech Cliff, including a high rope course for the older students. Programming included visits to the Wendell Gilley Museum, College of the Atlantic's Beech Hill Farm, Eastward Bowling Lanes, CoA's George B. Dorr Museum of Natural History, MDI Biological Laboratory, Acadia National Park's Sand Beach, and Stanwood Wildlife Sanctuary. Chrissy Fowler of Belfast Flying Shoes hosted a contra dance one evening at the hotel where the schools were staying - it was a huge hit! At the end of the contra dance, the TLC said a special goodbye with cards and balloons for three students who would be graduating out of the TLC at the end of the school year.

At the end of the school year, Linda informed the group that she would be leaving her teaching position on Matinicus. The superintendent of Monhegan and Matinicus (though in different districts) announced his intention to retire from both positions the coming fall, after a new teacher had been established for Matinicus.

Year Eight: 2017-2018

This year started off at the end of August, when teacher convened at the Institute's office in Rockland for the annual Teacher Retreat. This was the first time the event was held *before* the start of school, and it was viewed as a positive change. The newly hired teacher for Matinicus, Alan Johnson, was able to attend having only been hired two weeks before. Jan Keiper announced her coming retirement at the end of the year and also her newly appointed position as liaison for work between TLC schools and Island Readers and Writers. Read more about the TLC Teacher Retreat [here](#).

FALL

Students, teachers and parents from Isle Au Haut, Frenchboro, Monhegan Island, Cliff Island and Cranberry Isles converged on Isle Au Haut September 20-22 for their annual Inter-Island event. Island Readers and Writers participated with guest author, illustrator and musician Steve Costanza who hosted three workshops based on his picture book, "Vivaldi and the Invisible Orchestra."

The fall field trip to Brunswick was from Oct. 17-19. The TLC went to The Theater Project for improv and acting on the first day. On the second day, we explored the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath, followed by a lovely picnic lunch on the town green in Brunswick. Then - an afternoon sharing our social studies projects at the Curtis Memorial Library... and of course Capture the Flag!

Starting in September 2017, the Island Institute began a reorganization process in which the organizations was 'flattened' - eliminating much of the hierarchy as much as possible and moving to a team-based model in which all staff members in Programs work on multiple teams. As a result, Tess's title changed from Education Associate to Community Development Officer. Yvonne's title changed from Education Director to Community Development Officer/Education Specialist.

Teacher Michelle Carvallo from Cuttyhunk Island of the coast of Massachusetts attended the annual Island Teachers Conference on Oct. 6, after visiting Monhegan for three days with her students. Michelle has been increasing her participation in the TLC over the past couple of years.

Staff changes: Newly hired Matinicus teacher Alan Johnson left in the fall after only a few weeks due to health issues and long-time Matinicus summer resident and retired teacher Bob Moynihan (with support from his wife) is hired as the long-term sub. Monhegan hires Melanie Chasse to be their new superintendent.

SPRING

The TLC Advisors met with Island Institute staff several times this year: in Dec., Jan., Feb., March and April. The meetings were challenging at times as the TLC Advisors sought to get clarity from the Island Institute about the sustainability of the TLC within the Island Institute's evolving approach to program life cycles and funding. TLC founding mother Donna Isaacs created a two page [TLC Short History](#) that captures some of the issues that the TLC Advisors and the Island Institute have been grappling with.

The annual Middle School Retreat sponsored by the SeaCoast Mission was held in February. TLC students from Monhegan, Isle au Haut and the Cranberries attended. Read more about the 2018 Middle School Retreat [here](#).

Spring Field Trip to Bangor with visits to the Challenger Learning Center, UMO campus: Emera Astronomy Center & Planetarium, Advanced Structures Composites Lab, MaineBound Climbing and much more. Longfellow School was absent due to a spring school trip to Washington DC.

At the end of the school year, the follow staff changes were announced:

- Tess Beem announced that she would be taking a new position at NEGEF (New England Grassroots Environmental Fund) starting in June.
- Jan Keiper retires from teaching, but stays on as a coordinator for Island Readers and Writers.
- Michelle Turner leaves to teach abroad.
- Lauren Gray and Lindsay Eyesnogle resign from their positions to pursue other interests.

Year Nine: 2018-2019

This year started off at the end of August, when teacher convened at the Institute's office in Rockland for the annual Teacher Retreat. There were a number of new faces in the group, including: Morgan Heckerd (Monhegan student teacher), Maddi Etman (Matinicus), Mindi Vestal (Frenchboro) Haley Estabrook (Cranberries), along with returning TLC teachers Mandy Metrano (Monhegan), Rita MacWilliam (Isle au Haut) and Audrey Noether (Cranberries). The new teacher on Cliff, Jenny Baum was unable to attend as she had just arrived in Maine and the new TLC student services coordinator, Ian Collins had been hired, but was not yet on the job at Island Institute. An exciting addition to the group this year was Michelle Carvalho of Cuttyhunk Island, MA. Michelle and her students have participated in aspects of the TLC for the past few years and this year, Michelle was able to join us for the TLC Teacher retreat for the first time.

FALL HAPPENINGS

- Inter-Island Event - Students, teachers and parents from Isle Au Haut, Frenchboro, Cliff Island, the Cranberry Isles and Cuttyhunk converged on Monhegan from September 26-28 for the annual Inter-Island event which featured a game night, hiking, art project, movement workshops, an evening puppet show with Frogtown Puppeteers, capture the flag and plenty of great food, thanks to the crew at the Yew. Mandy, Jes and Marion out did themselves!
- Island Teachers Conference - several TLC teachers in attendance and reported it a very useful experience, both to stay connected to other TLC teachers and to network and learn from teachers from the other island schools.
- TLC School Tour - Ian and Yvonne went on tour and got to every island before the snow flew!
- Cliff Island was threatened with school closure by PPS. Yvonne was invited to give a presentation to the PPS board about the importance of keeping island schools open and TLC advisor Cheryl Crowley was named a commissioner on the PPS enrollment and capacity study commission.
- New administration for both Frenchboro and the Cranberries created tension as the district moved toward

more strict enforcement of school policies.

- In November, the one family on Matinicus with students in school left the island permanently. The school remains open, but there are no students and no teacher.
- The Fall Field Trip - In November, the TLC gathered in the Camden/Rockland area. We stayed at the Country Inn and visited the Transportation Museum in Owl's Head, the Camden-Rockport Transfer Station, the Farnsworth and CMCA, the Lighthouse Museum, Merryspring Nature Center, Owl's Head Light and rocked the house on the 4th floor of the Island Institute with an awesome contra dance!

SPRING HAPPENINGS

- In January, Ian Collins left us to take a full-time middle school science position at Edna Drinkwater School in Northport. We were able to quickly hire Robin Chernow in February to fill his position.
- Yvonne provided a one day, in depth workshop for TLC teachers on Ross Greene's CPS model. Mindi Vestal and Natalie Hyde-Peterson attended.
- In February, Mindi Vestal, teacher on Frenchboro, made the difficult decision to leave both her teaching position and the island. The district hired a long-term sub - Rachel Bishop, to fill in. One family chose to homeschool during this time and the other spent an extended time on the mainland, enrolling their students in the Pemetic School. Those two students did eventually return to Frenchboro and the school for the final weeks of school.
- Robin and Yvonne did a spring tour and visited every TLC island except for Frenchboro as there were no students in school for most of the spring. They traveled to Cuttyhunk and attended Gwen's graduation in June.
- The Spring Field Trip in May was to the Augusta area. We stayed at the Friends Camp in China, ME, and had a presentation on owls from Chewonki and visited Viles Arboretum, Kennebec County Humane Society, Old Fort Western, the Colby College Museum, the Maine State Museum and we watched a performance by Bobby Lovelace.
- Rita MacWilliams and Audrey Noether retired at the end of this school year. New teachers were hired for Frenchboro (Laura Venger), Isle au Haut (Marcela Carroll), Cranberries (Jan Keiper - she decided that she wasn't ready to retire and wanted to return to island teaching and the TLC, but on a different island). Matinicus remains open, but there are no students and no teacher.
- TLC Advisors met quarterly during this school year. Jan Keiper became an advisor.

YEAR TEN: 2019-2020 - To be updated